

## Religious practice and the Delian neighbourhoods: some case studies

### **Abstract:**

This article explores the relationship between neighbourhood and religious practice by examining three distinct areas on Hellenistic Delos. The focus is on the relationship between the creation of religious centres within neighbourhoods and individual choices made by the inhabitants of such neighbourhoods: did worshippers move to specific neighbourhoods to be near a shrine or did they create a shrine near their new home? How far would an individual go to worship a specific deity? My analysis shows that in order to sacrifice to a civic deity of choice, a worshipper was willing to travel far beyond her or his neighbourhood, while at the same time bestowing votives on deities of the neighbourhood and focusing on household religion. While occasionally a cultic centre attracted individuals to a specific neighbourhood, it was more common that worshippers created their own religious 'cityscapes' where they lived, including places of worship.

**Keywords:** Delos, Serapeion, Sanctuary of the Syrian gods, Syrian priests, Household religion, Stertinius, Skardhana quarter, Stadium quarter

### 1 Introduction

In this paper I examine the relationship between habitation and ritual practice by exploring select case studies on the island of Delos in the second and first centuries BCE. Owing to the excellent condition of its archaeological and epigraphic heritage, as well as its role as a maritime trading post, Delos provides valuable resources for an analysis of the relationship between between cults and neighbourhoods, old and new sanctuaries, and foundations of religious communities and 'private' sanctuaries. Delos functions here as a laboratory for a microanalysis of individual lived experiences during the later Hellenistic period. By looking at case studies of several individuals living on the island, whose religious activities are still preserved in the epigraphic and archaeological records, it is possible to understand, at least to some extent, their personal religious choices. The main aim of this article is to consider whether these choices were directed by factors such as the individual's origin, kinship, or, indeed, their 'neighbourhood'. Other factors, such as the individual's work or enterprise, or even simple routines of daily life such as fetching water from a fountain or river, are also considered as possible triggers for religious choices.

What exactly does ‘neighbourhood’ mean on an island as small as Delos, where all developed areas are within easy walking distance of each other? The island measures only 3.43 km<sup>2</sup> in total. Its oblong shape and the density of population in the north and middle sections of the island means that the distance between the east and west coast of the island is only 500 m at its narrowest (in the south) and around 750-1000 m from the main harbour to the coast on the opposite side of the island, not accounting for elevation. In practice, walking between the coasts might have taken as little as fifteen minutes, depending on the layout of the road or path taken. Despite this small size, the excavations of individual areas have shown that the polis was divided into quarters and these quarters can be equated sufficiently with what one might understand as ‘neighbourhoods’ to serve as such for the purpose of this article.<sup>1</sup> There is an important caveat about the arguments that follow. Owing to the often inconclusive nature of the evidence and the problems involved in identifying what might plausibly be described as ‘neighbourhoods’, let alone an individual inhabitant’s settlement within such ‘neighbourhoods’, my suggestions can only ever be tentative. Allowing for these limitations, this article should be seen as an attempt to reconstruct the religious lives of several individuals in the context of their urban environment.

The first living quarters, and possibly ‘neighbourhoods’, on Delos were clustered around the sanctuary of Apollo and the Inopos river, which was crucial for water supply on the otherwise dry island.<sup>2</sup> With the growth of Delos’ importance as a commercial city, in particular after it was made a free port by the Romans and came under the second Athenian dominion (166-88 BCE), the city grew from an estimated population of 1500-2000 during the period of independence to an estimated 15,000 inhabitants during the second Athenian occupation, with 1200 citizens attested epigraphically

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<sup>1</sup> The discussions that took place within the urban religion group in Erfurt in 2018 that aimed at a clearer definition of the term ‘neighbourhood’ were productive but not conclusive as to what exactly defines a neighbourhood, in particular with a view to the ancient world. I have therefore decided to use the word only tentatively.

<sup>2</sup> For the urban development of Delos see Chamonard 1922-24 and Papageorgiou-Venetas 1981. Both publications are discussed critically by Bruneau 1985, 564-566, who points out the homogeneity of the individual ‘quarters’ of Delos. A summary of the developments can be found in Zarmakoupi 2016, 50.

in the first century BCE.<sup>3</sup> During this time, the two older living quarters (theatre quarter, Inopos quarter) were extended east towards Mount Kynthos, where a cistern and several sanctuaries were built in due course.<sup>4</sup> The sudden growth of the urban population after 166 BCE, and the strategic importance of Delos as a port of call for many traders and merchants from Italy, Phoenicia, Africa, and beyond, meant that new living areas were necessary. As a result, houses were built on the other side of the island, to the north, and around the stadium. New sea harbours were also constructed, as demonstrated by recent maritime surveys in 2015/6.<sup>5</sup> However, the island is yet to be excavated in its entirety. Stratigraphic documentation is missing for the stadium area, which was excavated at the end of the nineteenth/early twentieth century when stratigraphic data were not recorded. This means that a full reconstruction of the city's actual inhabited space during its urban peak around 100 BCE is not yet possible. In any case, we know that two areas that were initially used for agricultural purposes and gardens (κήποι)<sup>6</sup> were replaced by two living quarters near the recently discovered sea harbours (the 'Skardhana quarter' and the 'stadium quarter'). These findings cast new light on the rest of Delos and especially on the 'old centre'. For example, the area around the stadium on the north-east side of the island has always been regarded as somewhat secluded, since it was not directly connected to the main harbour and the sanctuary of Apollo. The knowledge that this side was also equipped with a safe sea harbour makes it possible to conclude that these 'new quarters' had economic significance, and that people living there would have had better opportunities for commercial enterprise than previously thought.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Zarmakoupi 2014, 556. Le Dinahet-Couilloud 1974, 307-335 has estimated a higher population density in the period of Athenian occupation of around 20,000 inhabitants.

<sup>4</sup> This area was also home to the 'terrace of foreign gods' which hosted a sanctuary to the Egyptian and Syrian deities a bit later, namely in the second century BCE.

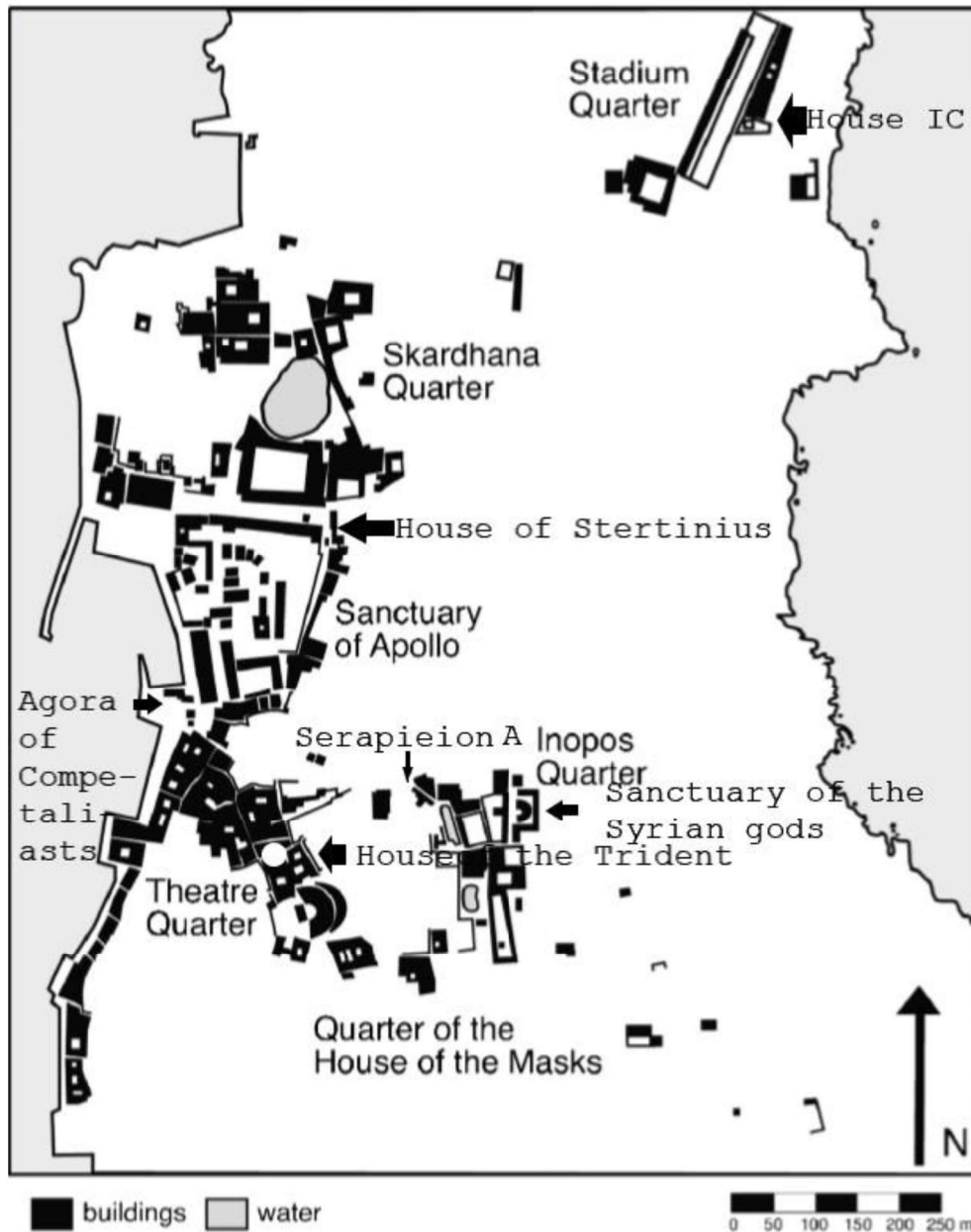
<sup>5</sup> Zarmakoupi 2015, 124.

<sup>6</sup> Bruneau 1979, 89.

<sup>7</sup> Zarmakoupi 2015, 117 reports that 'evidence for workshops and shops in this area (Skardhana)... suggests that this area served to accommodate small-scale commercial activities that developed alongside the Delian emporion'. For the area around the stadium she argues that 'The Stadion District was hitherto considered a kind of suburb, since it seems now to be cut off from the western side of the island. The discoveries made during the underwater investigation of the Stadion District prove that this area was very similar in character to the main harbour area and was an integral part of the Delian *emporion*. It appears that a second commercial harbour operated in this area and complemented the activities of the central harbour of Delos in the western part of the island' (Zarmakoupi 2015, 124).

The three exemplary neighbourhoods for this chapter are an 'old', a 'newer', and a 'newest' neighbourhood. I shall focus on specific houses in connection with members of religious and commercial associations and individual cult founders, starting in the Inopos quarter, one of the newer quarters, with an examination of Apollonios II and his grandfather's in-house chapel of Serapis. Next, I shall investigate the 'house of the trident' also constructed in a 'newer' quarter and probably belonging to a Syrian priest who can be connected to the Syrian deities Atargatis and Hadad, worshipped in the nearby sanctuary. Lastly, I shall look at several houses owned by *Romaioi*, one of which was located in the oldest quarter of Delos, directly opposite the Apollo sanctuary, while the other was found in one of the 'newest' Delian 'neighbourhoods', in the Quartier du Stade. I shall focus on the ritual practice that took place within the houses of the *Romaioi* and on their involvement in cults beyond their immediate 'neighbourhood'.

I shall argue for three main points: first, rather than affecting an individual's religious preferences and cultic practices on Delos, neighbourhood provided the space to create new religious 'cityscapes'. Second, in order to practise a religious cult of choice, in particular when related to an individual's ethnic or societal identity, an individual might travel beyond their own neighbourhood. Third, a major factor underlying the creation of individual religious practices on Delos, especially with the growth of the Italic community on the island, was the establishment of domestic cults.



*Fig. 1 Comprehensive map of Delos with indication of relevant sanctuaries and dwellings discussed here (after Nevett 2010)*

## 2 The Inopos quarter, Apollonios II and his ‘in-house chapel’

The famous case of Apollonios II, self-proclaimed founder of Serapeion A and heir to the Delian priesthood of Serapis in the third generation, has given scholars much information about the connections between Greco-Egyptian cults, cult transfer, and the involvement of ‘foreigners’ in Greek

urban landscapes.<sup>8</sup> According to Apollonios, the following happened after he took over the priesthood from his father:

‘When I received the sacred things and attended  
diligently to the services, the god sent an oracle to me  
in my sleep, that a private Serapieion must  
15 be dedicated to him and that it must not be in  
rented lodgings as before, and that he would discover the place  
himself where it was to be founded, and he would indicate  
the place; which did indeed happen. For this place,  
which had been advertised for sale on a little bill  
20 in the passage way of the marketplace, was full  
of manure. Since the god was willing, the  
purchase was accomplished, and the temple was very quickly constructed  
in six months.’(*IG* XI, 4, 1299, ll.12-23, transl. Moyer 2011)<sup>9</sup>

Leaving aside the aretalogical aspects of the text, it becomes clear that the shrine of the god had initially been located in a rented, presumably residential, house. At some point at the end of the third or the beginning of the second century BCE, Apollonios II then found a plot of land on which to build his Serapeion, but not before he had won a court case to establish his right to ownership of the plot.

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<sup>8</sup> For a full discussion of the case, a translation and commentary of the relevant inscription (*IG* XII 1299) and the modern historiography see Moyer 2011 and Engelmann 1975, for details on the court-case see Bruneau 1975, 281-283. For an initial discussion of the water crypt and the architecture of Serapeion A see Bruneau 1990, 556-594. For a summary of the narrative and its historical context as well as the meaning of private initiatives in Delian neighbourhoods see Constantakopoulou 2017, 79-86.

<sup>9</sup> *IG* XI, 4, 1299, ll.12-23: παραλαβόντος δέ μου τὰ ἱερὰ καὶ προσκαθη|μένου ταῖς θεραπέαις ἐπιμελῶς, ὁ θεὸς μοι ἐχρη|μάτισεν κατὰ τὸν ὕπνον ὅτι Σαραπιεῖον δεῖ || αὐτῷ ἀναδειχθῆναι ἴδιον καὶ μὴ εἶναι ἐν μισ|θωτοῖς καθὼς πρότερον, εὐρήσειν τε τόπον | αὐτὸς οὗ δεῖ ἐδρασθῆναι σημαίνειν τε τὸν | τόπον. ὃ καὶ ἐγένετο. ὁ γὰρ τόπος οὗτος ἦν κόπρου μεστός ὃς προεγγέγραπτο πω||λούμενος ἐν βιβλιδίῳ ἐν τεῖ διόδῳ τῆς | ἀγορᾶς· τοῦ δὲ θεοῦ βουλομένου συνετελέ|σθη ἡ ὥνῃ κατεσκευάσθη τε τὸ ἱρὸν συντόμως | ἐν μηνὶ ἑξ.

There are various scenarios that might explain why the purchase of land was made difficult for Apollonios II, but one possible contributing factor was the excellent location of the land next to the Inopos reservoir, where it would have had access to fresh water via a canal.<sup>10</sup>

The plot of land 'chosen by the god' was surrounded by residential houses and the new Serapeion (A) was accessible via a flight of fourteen steps which gave access to the shrine from the street. The rest of the sanctuary consisted of a walled complex of three rooms and a small podium-temple (A). The sanctuary itself, surrounded as it was by residential property and with the extant building almost resembling a house, at least from the outside, was probably not even recognisable as such to passers-by.

Soon after the construction of Serapeion A,<sup>11</sup> a second shrine to the same divinity was built on the opposite side of the reservoir (Serapeion B, fig. 2). The construction took place on a steep rocky slope, expanding the inhabited territory of Delos further up towards Mount Kynthos.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Siard 1998.

<sup>11</sup> The chronology of the erection of the three Serapeia on Delos is not entirely clear and is currently being re-examined by Hélène Brun (EfA/Paris/Sorbonne) in order to clarify their phases of construction from the Hellenistic to the Imperial period.

<sup>12</sup> According to the inventory lists this sanctuary was in use at least from 202-88 BCE.

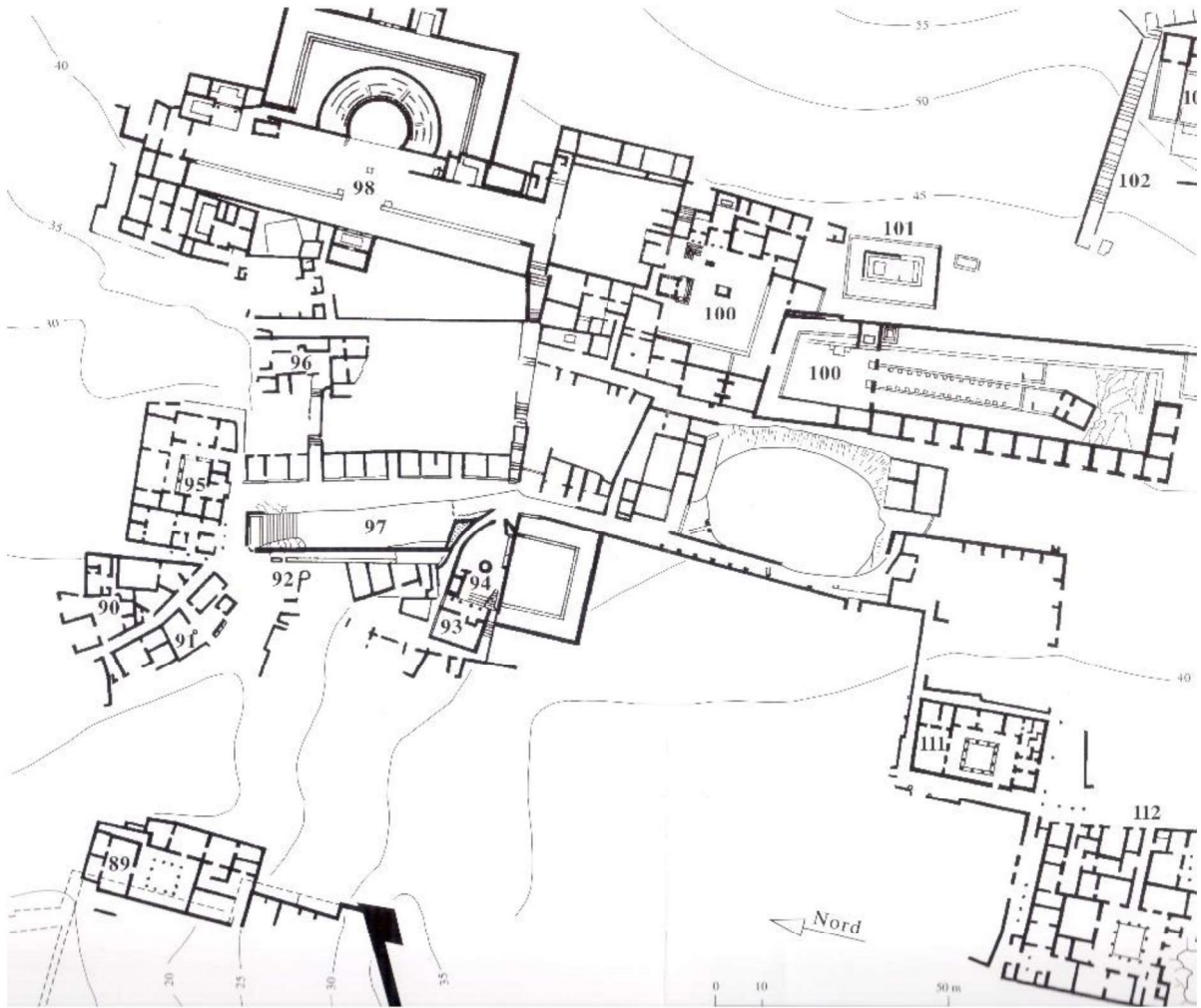


Fig. 2. The Inopos quarter with Serapeion A (91), Serapeion B (96), Serapeion C (100) and the Sanctuary of the Syrian deities (98), Heraion 101

Just like Serapeion A, Serapeion B could be reached via a steep stairway of twenty-six steps along a narrow corridor that led up from a shopping-street on a lower level. The entrance of the sanctuary was flanked by benches leading to a courtyard with rooms scattered around it, with a design similar to that of most other Delian houses. Apart from several possible utility rooms, the sanctuary contained a small podium-temple (A) with three chapel-like sub-divisions (G), each of which might plausibly be attributed to one of the three Egyptian deities: Isis, Serapis, and Anubis.

A third sanctuary to the Egyptian deities, Serapeion C, was built soon after the two earlier Serapeia in the same neighbourhood (fig. 2).<sup>13</sup> It was much larger than the other two Serapeia and was located directly beside the sanctuary of the Syrian gods to the south, on a terrace above the upper Inopos-reservoir. The southern section of the sanctuary, a trapezoidal court of around 90 m length, included an alley leading to a temple.<sup>14</sup> Now, the Inopos quarter was dominated by shrines and temples dedicated to the Egyptian gods: Serapeion B was located approximately fifty metres east of Serapeion A. Serapeion C was a further fifty metres south-east of Serapeion B. One wonders why the need arose for three Serapeia right next to each other. Who were the inhabitants of this neighbourhood? And why did Apollonios choose this neighbourhood to erect the 'first' Serapeion?

The dwellings surrounding the reservoir have been analysed by Bruneau with regard to their chronology but not a single residential house could be assigned to an individual inhabitant or a specific family.<sup>15</sup> The fact that so many inscriptions of associations were found in the vicinity of the sanctuaries indicates that the shrines were frequented not only by travellers and merchants leaving votives on a flying visit, as is suggested by the sanctuaries' wealth and epigraphic records, but also by locals who met in them regularly.<sup>16</sup> However, as described above, the two smaller Serapeia were not very visible for non-locals. Rather, they were hidden behind walls and were thus only accessible to those who already knew of their existence. The membership lists of the associations that met in Serapeion B indicate that members were, at least in the case of those for whom an ethnic origin can be established, predominantly Delian and Aegean, especially in the higher ranking positions and among the priests.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> *GD* 100. Roussel suggests that this sanctuary was founded privately as a smaller complex in the north but was later enlarged and turned into a public temple: Roussel 1916/15, 69.

<sup>14</sup> The sanctuary can be located directly beside that of the Syrian gods to the south, on a terrace above the upper Inopos-reservoir. It is divided in two parts: the southern section consists of a trapezoidal area c. 90 m long that includes an alley leading to a temple while the northern section consists of a courtyard furnished with numerous altars and votive-objects and surrounded by buildings, one of which is a podium. Also, a metroon occurs in several inscriptions and has been identified as a building in the northern part of the complex (see Bruneau 1970, 431-435), near the Doric temple of Isis.

<sup>15</sup> Bruneau 1973.

<sup>16</sup> The inventory of the Serapeia show that the sanctuaries had the most extensive treasure during the Athenian period aside from the sanctuary of Apollo, Hamilton 2000, 19. The priests of Sarapis however, ranked ninth among the Delian priests in this period, see Bruneau 1970, 464.

<sup>17</sup> Steinhauer 2014, 82-85.

Serapeion C, on the other hand, was of representative character with respect to its elevated position, long court flanked by colonnades, and outstanding size. It was partly sponsored by the Athenians, who dedicated the Doric temple to Isis.<sup>18</sup>

Apollonios I, who had initially established the cult of Serapis in his own house,<sup>19</sup> probably at some point during the first quarter of the third century BCE, may have already been a resident of the Inopos quarter, which was established as a residential quarter at the end of the fourth and the beginning of the third century BCE.<sup>20</sup> If this was the case, then he was responsible for the introduction of a type of cult that came to characterise the neighbourhood, which was in the course of the third to first centuries BCE transformed into a 'centre' for the worship of the Egyptian (and later also Syrian) gods.<sup>21</sup>

One can imagine that the smaller Serapeia were initially frequented by individuals resident in this neighbourhood, as well as a few others who were aware of the shrines. The construction of the grand Serapeion C changed the character of the cult from a rather intimate affair of select groups of Serapis-worshippers who gathered in small shrines in the midst of residential houses—attested mainly in the first half of the second century BCE before the Athenian occupation<sup>22</sup> — to a cosmopolitan cult with a focus on the popular goddess Isis. With regard to the broader neighbourhood, the wealth of the new Serapeion, recorded in the inventory lists of the period after the Athenian occupation and in the many votive dedications made by the ethnically diverse clientele of the sanctuary,<sup>23</sup> suggests that the erection of Serapeion C coincided with the flourishing of the Inopos quarter itself, which now hosted the second most popular sanctuary on Delos.

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<sup>18</sup> *ID* 2041 (second half second century BCE).

<sup>19</sup> *IG* XII 1299, II. 39-40.

<sup>20</sup> The houses in the area were built in the late fourth-early third century BCE. Many were redecorated and refurbished in the second century BCE, Bruneau 1973, 128-129.

<sup>21</sup> Bruneau 1973, 128-129.

<sup>22</sup> *Therapeutai* of the Egyptian gods are attested from the end of the third century BCE, e. g. *RICIS* 202/0121 until the beginning of the first century BCE, e. g. *RICIS* 202/0352 (93/2 BCE). *Melanephoroi* appear in the first half of the second century BCE (e. g. *RICIS* 202/0135 until the first century BCE (e. g. 202/0352). However, *Serapiastai* are only attested before the Athenian occupation in the second century BCE (*RICIS* 202/0135, 202/0421, 202/0422, 202/0424), as are *Dekadistai* and *eranistai* (*RICIS* 202/0139) and *Enatistai* (*RICIS* 202/0140).

<sup>23</sup> Hamilton 2000, 19.

One of the consequences of the rising number of inhabitants in the second to first centuries BCE was that new building projects in and around the shrines were undertaken by the worshippers themselves, gathering as associations.<sup>24</sup> These associations were concerned in particular with the maintenance of the premises and new buildings.<sup>25</sup> A fragmentary inscription dating to 96/5 BCE is particularly telling:<sup>26</sup> a group of *therapeutai* raised funds for the erection of a *hydreion* at one of the shrines to the Egyptian deities. Among the 106 subscribers of *RICIS* 202/0209 are twenty-one women offering one to two drachmae each and six women whose husbands or sons dedicate on their behalf. Amongst the other members were Athenian citizen women who held important offices in the cult, such as Theophile, the daughter of the priest and *kannephoros*.<sup>27</sup> Non-Greek women held equally important positions, even those normally reserved for men. For instance, Mindia, a *Romaia*, served as an *oneirokritis*, a dream interpreter at the Serapeion,<sup>28</sup> while Arete, a women of unknown origin, was a lamp or torch carrier (*lamptephoros*).<sup>29</sup> Asia Nemerou, supposedly a female slave, is named before Tertia Stlaccia, probably a freeborn *Romaia*, and many others.<sup>30</sup> This inscription is a snapshot of a temporary network that united individuals from a wide variety of backgrounds for a common purpose, namely the dedication of a building to the Egyptian deities and the creation of a social space of interaction in a specific ‘neighbourhood’ that they clearly intended to improve. Among other things, these people paid for a garden and a *hydreion*.<sup>31</sup>

Apollonios II, by buying a plot of land on which to erect his Serapeion A in the Inopos quarter, seems to have set in motion a trend that changed the neighbourhood dramatically over the next century. The erection of two more Serapeia shows that there was not only a strong dynamic of

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<sup>24</sup> See above **note** 22.

<sup>25</sup> These particular associations are discussed thoroughly by Baslez 2013, Baslez 2014.

<sup>26</sup> *RICIS* 202/0209.

<sup>27</sup> *RICIS* 202/0209 Frg. a, col. I, ll.8-9.

<sup>28</sup> *RICIS* 202/0209 Frg. b, col.I, l. 10.

<sup>29</sup> *RICIS* 202/0209 Frg. B, col. I, l. 22 and 27.

<sup>30</sup> For a more thorough discussion of this inscription see Steinhauer 2019, 230-231.

<sup>31</sup> Apart from being identified as a water reservoir or Nilometer, the *Hydreion* could also have been understood as a shrine to *Hydreios*, the personification of the Nile water, see e. g. *ID* 2155 (106-103 BCE). There are several other subscription lists dating from the end of the second to the first quarter of the first century BCE (*RICIS* 202/0204-0214) which are mostly concerned with building works at the sanctuaries of the Egyptian deities.

demand and supply but that each Serapeion served a different purpose, suitable for its own community and worshippers. The members of the associations were very proactive with regard to the creation of sacred space in the neighbourhood, donating money to develop the environment in which they wished to dwell.

### 3 The Sanctuary of the Syrian gods and the house of the Syrian priest

Soon after the Serapeia were built, a large sanctuary dedicated to the Syrian deities Atargatis and Hadad was erected immediately adjacent to Serapeion C.<sup>32</sup> The sanctuary was founded by Syrians from Hierapolis-Manbog and other northern Syrian communities.<sup>33</sup> It was initially run by Syrian priests from Hierapolis and supported by several religious associations, among them a *koinon* of *thiasitai* of the Syrian goddess and several groups of *therapeutai*.<sup>34</sup> These groups, just like the associations supporting the Egyptian gods, were involved in shaping the sacred space. Particularly important to the worshippers was the erection of the theatre, paid for by *therapeutai* of the Syrian gods. As in the case of the Serapeia, the location of the sanctuary was important and the fact that Serapeion C had already been built next door seems to have influenced the decision to establish the shrine here: Serapeion C and the sanctuary of the Syrian gods even shared an external wall.<sup>35</sup> Worshippers attested in the Serapeia also frequented the sanctuary of the Syrian gods, as is recorded in the inventory lists and dedications. What is more, individual donations of assembly rooms were made by wealthy individuals.<sup>36</sup> The sanctuary was self-sufficient thanks to the financial support of its vibrant community

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<sup>32</sup> For the history of the sanctuary see Siebert 1968.

<sup>33</sup> Andrade 2017, 4.

<sup>34</sup> Seven priests from Hierapolis were identified by Will and Schmid 1985, 139-140 and *ID* 2225. p. 140. The inscription of the association of Syrians is *RICIS* 202/0194; *therapeutai* of the Syrian deities are documented in *ID*: 2222 (110/9 BCE), 2224 (105/4 BCE), 2227 (118/17 BCE), 2229 (112/1 BCE), 2230 (110/9 BCE), 2231 (110/9 BCE), 2234 (106/5 BCE), 2237 (100/99 BCE), 2240 (96/5 BCE), 2241 (?), 2250 (107/6 BCE), 2251-2252 (each 108/7 and 106/5 BCE), 2253 (106/05 BCE), 2277 (?), 2531 (?), 2626 (113/12 BCE?), 2628 (108/7 BCE), SEG 35.887 (108/7 BCE).

<sup>35</sup> Steinhauer 2014.

<sup>36</sup> For example, the dining hall erected by Midas, a citizen of Heraclea in southern Italy who was not only a friend of Philostratos of Ascalon but who also seems to have been originally from the Levant. For the inscription on the dining hall see SEG 35:884. On Midas' origin see Leiwo 1989, 579.

and its wealthy donors. Some of these individuals are well known from other dedications on Delos, as is the case with, for example, Midas of Heraclea, Philostratos of Ascalon, and Kleostratides the Athenian.<sup>37</sup> These three individuals were all members of the *therapeutai* of the Syrian gods. At the same time, they also dedicated generously to other deities, including Apollo and the gods of their hometowns.<sup>38</sup> Unfortunately, their houses have not been identified, rendering it impossible to associate these individuals with specific ‘neighbourhoods’.<sup>39</sup>

Not far from the Inopos quarter, in the ‘house of the trident’ in the neighbouring theatre quarter, a set of miniature masks was uncovered depicting male individuals wearing what looks like the headdresses of Syrian priests from Hierapolis-Manbog (fig. 3a).



<sup>37</sup> At least, it does not appear in the public records of the island, e. g., the inventory lists held for most of the other sanctuaries.

<sup>38</sup> Leiwo 1989.

<sup>39</sup> Evidence to link the so called ‘house of Philostratos’ in the old centre of the city to the actual person is too thin to make a definite case.

*Fig. 3 a) Miniature masks of Syrian priests found in the house of the trident (Marcadé 1952); b) reverse of a didrachm from Hierapolis showing priest performing a sacrifice, third quarter of the fourth century BCE; c) Stele of the 'grand priest' Alexander at Hierapolis, first century BCE (Stucky 1976); and d) head of a sculpture depicting a Syrian priest from Hierapolis, second century CE (Blömer 2015).*

Syrian priests from Hierapolis are usually depicted with their canonical headdresses, such as the priest of Attis identified as Abd-Hadad shown sacrificing at an altar on a didrachm dating to around 330 BCE (3b). Similarly, the image of the grand-priest Alexander on a Hierapolitan inscribed stele dating to the first century BCE (3c) and the sculpture of a Hierapolitan priest from the Roman Imperial period (3d) bear striking similarities to the masks. Even though the diadems are not completely identical in each case, the cylindrical shape of the canonical tiara with its pointed top is clearly recognisable in our four examples.<sup>40</sup> This is no coincidence, since the priests of Atargatis and Hadad on Delos were in fact Hierapolitans, at least initially. Therefore, there must be a direct connection between the inhabitant of the house, the sanctuary, and the priesthood.

The occupant could have easily been a Hierapolitan priest, several of whom are attested in inscriptions from the sanctuary of the Syrian gods.<sup>41</sup> The office of priest to the Syrian goddess was annual and elected. One must assume that these Hierapolitans were resident on Delos, at least for the duration of their priesthood.<sup>42</sup> From the inscriptions we can gather that they were largely 'Hellenised' in their naming habits: most of the individuals with indications of Levantine citizenship in their nomenclature bear Greek names. The grave stelae erected on Rhenea by Delian residents reveal the origins of individuals not through their artistic style or by actual burial practices, but only onomastically, with the addition of a 'foreign' ethnic designation.<sup>43</sup> Similarly, Delian houses were

<sup>40</sup> On the similarity between images b and c see Andrade 2017, 4. For the date for the issuing of the coin in the late Achaemenid period see Andrade 2017, 14.

<sup>41</sup> As suggested by Marcadé 1952, among others.

<sup>42</sup> See *ID* 2226.

<sup>43</sup> On the artistic style of the grave monuments Le Dinahet-Couilloud 1974, 249: 'Il faut bien reconnaître qu'une impression de monotonie se dégage d'un album consacré à des stèles funéraires. Les monuments de Rhénée ne font pas exception: les mêmes schémas, les mêmes drapes classicisants s'y retrouvent à d'infinis exemplaires.'

equally homogenous and uniform and rarely indicate the occupier's ethnic origin.<sup>44</sup> The owner of this house is unlikely to have been poor, given its layout and decorations, as well as its location.<sup>45</sup> While the sanctuary that the priest attended on a regular basis was in the Inopos quarter, the residential house was in the more upscale neighbourhood near the theatre, and this may have been a conscious decision on the part of the priest.

In conclusion, the character of the Inopos quarter was shaped by its various sanctuaries, in all their differing sizes and purposes, as well as by its vibrant and multi-ethnic communities of worshippers, whether these were organised in associations, locals, or, indeed, composed of 'pilgrims' en route to another destination in the Mediterranean. The heterogeneous character of the neighbourhood also means that it is often difficult to establish exactly who lived there, let alone who lived in any particular house.<sup>46</sup> Thus far, only identifiable houses have been some of those owned or inhabited by individuals of Italic origins, due to the installations or paintings that are typical for Lararia. However, only eighteen houses on Delos can be identified in this way as belonging to individuals with Italic origins, even though this is by far the best attested ethnic group on the island.<sup>47</sup> The third part of this paper will thus focus on two houses owned by *Romaioi* where the identification of the inhabitant is made possible through the epigraphic evidence.

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<sup>44</sup> As mentioned earlier, Delian houses only rarely give away their owner/inhabitant's origins (see also Bruneau 1968, 665). However, there are exceptions. Some of the houses that were rented or owned by *Romaioi* were furnished with 'Italian' Lararia, as I will explore later on. A mosaic in the house of the dolphins which is also located in the theatre quarter depicts the sign of Tanit, a Phoenician goddess, and may indicate an inhabitant from the Levant.

<sup>45</sup> Another option would be that the owner was an Athenian priest of the Syrian deities, many of which are also attested towards the end of the second century BCE. Arguably, such an Athenian priest could own a mask depicting the 'original' Hierapolitan priestly headdress. These Athenian priests seem to have either tried to keep the near Eastern tradition or had a knack for 'exoticisms': several inscriptions provide evidence for dedications of near Eastern objects with Aramaic names, by Athenian priests. The function of one of the dedicated objects is yet to be identified. In *ID* 2234, 106/05, Zoilos, an Athenian priest of the Syrian goddess dedicated an *eigan* on his behalf and that of Midas and the *therapeutai* (*eigan*=Aramaic for 'basin', Will and Schmid 1985, 155). In *ID* 2040, another Athenian priest, Gaios dedicated a *namaran* on his behalf and that of the *therapeutai*. (*namaran*=Aramaic term for a cylindric object made of marble the function of which is yet to be identified, Will and Schmid 1985, 154). The same object is dedicated by the priest Menelaos in 97/96 BCE (*ID* 2041).

<sup>46</sup> 'Mais si nous connaissons par les inscriptions de très nombreux habitants d'origines très diverses, la quasi-totalité des maisons reste anonyme', Bruneau 1968, 665.

<sup>47</sup> Hasenohr 2003, 120-123, identified a total of 62 structures related to Compitalia, including houses owned by associations, crossroads and public buildings, only 18 of which are private houses. For the demography see Le Dinahet-Couilloud 1974, 308 and for the identification of the *Romaioi* see Le Dinahet-Couilloud 2001.

#### 4 House IC, the house of Stertinius and the *Romaioi*

In the stadium district, across the island from the Inopos quarter, a house (house IC) has been excavated and identified as having belonged to one Quintus Tullius (Κόιντος Τύλλιος).<sup>48</sup> The identification of the inhabitant as Quintus Tullius was made via a bilingual Greek and Latin inscription (ID 1802) erected with a (now missing) statue of the owner of the house by three freedman, including his former slave Heracleon.<sup>49</sup> The two unnamed freedmen probably conducted business on the island on Quintus Tullius' behalf and Heracleon may have been given his freedom as a result of his involvement in such work.<sup>50</sup>

Quintus Tullius and his freedman Heracleon were both members of associations. Whereas Heracleon had been a member of the *Kompetaliastai*, an association consisting of slaves and freedmen with Italic origins,<sup>51</sup> Quintus Tullius was a member of the *Apolloniastai* (ID 1739 125/4 BCE), devoted to the main deity of Delos and also comprised of members with Italic roots, albeit of free status only.<sup>52</sup> A certain Κόιντος Τύλλιος was possibly among the subscribers who supported the erection of the theatre to the Syrian gods mentioned above p. 10-13 (ID 2628 frg. b col. II, l. 6). In that inscription, only the Praenomen and first letter (T) of the nomen are clearly legible. The filiation, which in any case only seems to appear in the Latin inscriptions, is missing. Nevertheless, it would not be surprising to find him among the Roman, Levantine, and Athenian subscribers, some of whom are well known from other inscriptions on Delos.<sup>53</sup>

Quintus Tullius and his freedmen lived in the 'new' stadium quarter, but much of their religious activity took place in the centre of the old city and very possibly in the Inopos quarter. Despite

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<sup>48</sup> He appears as Quintus Tullius, Q. f. in Latin inscriptions (ID 2534 & ID 1802). On the identification see also Zarmakoupi 2017, 136.

<sup>49</sup> Heracleon, when still a slave, had already made a dedication as a member of the *Kompetaliastai* in 97/6 BCE (ID 1761), the findspot of the inscription on the agora of the *Hermaistai*//*Kompetaliastai* is indicated in fig 8 above. Plassart 1916, 206; Hatzfeld 1912, 86 Tullii 1.

<sup>50</sup> Zarmakoupi 2016, 57.

<sup>51</sup> On the Compitalia on Delos see Hasenohr 2003, Hasenohr 2007.

<sup>52</sup> Hasenohr 2003, 211.

<sup>53</sup> See above p. 13 and Steinhauer (forthcoming).

its distance from the religious and commercial centres of Delos, there were good reasons to choose the stadium quarter as a base, not the least of which was that it offered its inhabitants direct access to the sea and a sheltered harbour, recently discovered by the latest submarine surveys. These surveys revealed several submerged structures identified as commercial houses as well as an artificially enhanced harbour, all of which are now well below the water level, which has risen by approximately 2.5 m in the last 2000 years.<sup>54</sup> During Delos' commercial heyday, the main port was probably overcrowded, in particular during the festival season. Moving to a new area with direct access to the sea and probably less commercial and touristic footfall would have conferred advantages with view to real estate. What else did the stadium district have to offer? What kind of neighbourhood can we expect here? The houses that have been excavated show that this area was inhabited by businessmen, some of whom have been identified as *Romaioi*. The house next to that of Quintus Tullius (house ID) was even restructured according to well-known Roman architectural principles, combining business facilities on the lower floor with a luxurious living space on the upper floor – an exception on Delos and a style particular to this 'neighbourhood'.<sup>55</sup> Lararia were a common feature, found in houses IB, IC, and ID. Equipped with altars and painted niches just like their Roman counterparts, these household shrines indicated the clear focus on domestic religion that was introduced by the Italian merchants.

The stadium quarter, it seems, was dominated by the dwellings of merchants who combined living-space and business, as well as household religion, in one building. The example of Quintus Tullius and his freedmen demonstrates that when it came to common worship the inhabitants made their way to the old centre, the agora of the *Kompetaliastai*, which combined religious structures, including

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<sup>54</sup> In fact, Zarmakoupi 2015, 124 claims that: 'The Stadion District was hitherto considered a kind of suburb, since it seems now to be cut off from the western side of the island. The discoveries made during the underwater investigation of the Stadion District prove that this area was very similar in character to the main harbour area and was an integral part of the Delian *emporion*. It appears that a second commercial harbour operated in this area and complemented the activities of the central harbour of Delos in the western part of the island.'

<sup>55</sup> Usually on Delos, the houses identified as inhabited by Italian merchants were rather diverse in style and had not one specific 'Italian' architecture: Nevett 2010, 87.

the Apollo sanctuary, with a strategic economic location.<sup>56</sup> The neighbourhood itself, which was built along the back of the stadium, had, apart from the so-called synagogue<sup>57</sup> in the south, no buildings that are identifiable as ‘public’ temples or shrines. The *Romaioi* and other merchants operating out of Delos who settled in the new residential area of the stadium could practise rituals as members of associations together with their fellow country-men in the city centre (i. e. the *Poseidoniastai*, *Kompetaliastai*, *Apolloniastai*). Unless and until further excavations of the stadium quarter uncover ‘new’ sanctuaries, we can reasonably say that religious practice in this neighbourhood was, at least for the *Romaioi*, restricted to their household cults and that the ‘neighbourhood’ was not shaped by a ‘main temple’ or similar structure. For other religious activities the inhabitants travelled some 900-1400 metres to the old town, the agora of the *Kompetaliastai*, the temple of Apollo, and probably other areas, perhaps even as far afield as the Inopos quarter, as Quintus Tullius’ contribution to the sanctuary of the Syrian gods suggests.<sup>58</sup>

The last case study investigates the religious activities of the Stertinian family in connection with their house and its prominent location.<sup>59</sup> The house was identified as the habitation of Spurius Stertinus by a dedication to Artemis Soteira on the base of a statuette found in a niche in the outer wall (*ID* 2378).<sup>60</sup> The house (house E) was located in the very centre of the old city, directly opposite the entrance to the Apollo sanctuary and next to the ‘Agora of the Italians’ in a ‘downtown commercial location’<sup>61</sup> serving both residential and commercial needs. Spurius Stertinus made his personal

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<sup>56</sup> Fraisse 1983, 307.

<sup>57</sup> No Jews or Samaritans can be connected to a private dwelling on Delos apart from the synagogue. I am not going to discuss the case for and against an identification of *GD* with what is commonly understood as a synagogue at this point, as others have done so extensively. To my mind, the building certainly served as a meeting place for worshippers of *theos hypsistos* (and maybe others too) but whether or not one should call it a ‘synagogue’ is debateable. For a summary of settlers from Israel on Delos see Bruneau 1982. For a discussion of the building see Trümper 2004.

<sup>58</sup> If the name in *ID* 2628 discussed above p. 16 is in fact congruent with our Quintus Tullius. Most dedications on the terrace of the foreign gods were made by *Romaioi*. Whether this merely appears to be the case because *Romaioi* are particularly easy to identify by name or whether this reflects the actual numbers is a matter for debate.

<sup>59</sup> All inscriptions date to the end of the second-early first century BCE.

<sup>60</sup> For a summary of the cult on Delos and its private character as well as an image see Siebert 1966, esp. 449 and 453. See Kreeb 1984, 328 for an image, a description of the findspot and the architectural inclusion of the niche and statuette into the design of the house.

<sup>61</sup> McClain and Rauh 1996, 48.

religious choice to erect what looks like a domestic shrine immediately in the entryway of his house, where it would be visible to everyone who entered the Apollo sanctuary. Here he placed a statuette of Artemis Soteira, a goddess only attested in private dedications on Delos and often linked with the seafaring community. He confirmed his devotion to this particular goddess in a second dedication that was found in the 'temple of the Bastion',<sup>62</sup> not far from his home. However, Stertinius' devotion to rather unusual divinities associated with his neighbourhood did not stop there. He also dedicated a relief to the nymphs of the nearby Minoe fountain (*ID* 2446), the only one of its kind, as well as an altar to the Charites (*ID* 2449),<sup>63</sup> probably originally placed on the agora of Theophrastos. All of these dedications were made in his very own neighbourhood and probably marked locations that he visited very regularly. It is possible that Stertinius' name also appears in a collective dedicatory inscription together with those of other 'Italikoi', dedicating a portico on the Agora of the Italians (*ID* 1687). The corrupt state of the inscription, with certainty about only a few letters, does not allow for any stronger conclusions.<sup>64</sup>

Only two dedications were made by Stertinius outside of his 'neighbourhood', both to the Egyptian gods at Serapeion C.<sup>65</sup> Interestingly, neither dedication was made to the omnipresent Isis and Serapis. Instead, Stertinius dedicated to the less well-attested deities Hydreios (*ID* 2155) and Hermanubis (*ID* 2156). This decision, together with the content of the inscriptions, points to a very personal relationship with these gods as well as personal reasons for the dedications: Stertinius thanked Hydreios for 'listening' and Hermanubis for bringing victory of some sort (he carries the epithet 'nikephoros').

Philippe Bruneau once described Stertinius' religious preferences as the 'eclecticism of his piety'.<sup>66</sup> It is true that Stertinius' behaviour is rather unlike that of other bankers and merchants on

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<sup>62</sup> *ID* 2379.

<sup>63</sup> The dedication to the Charites is only one of four dedications to these goddesses and the only one by a *Romaïos*. McClain and Rauh 1996, 49.

<sup>64</sup> 1 a, 4: S. St[er]ti[ni]us.

<sup>65</sup> *ID* 2155, *ID* 2156.

<sup>66</sup> Bruneau 1970, 661.

Delos, most of whom dedicated several times to Apollo or other 'major' gods.<sup>67</sup> It is slightly surprising that he restricted his many dedications to somewhat 'exotic' gods, considering that his house was located so close to the Apollo sanctuary that he must have been aware of its popularity, not to mention that of the Agora of the Italians, with all its dedications by fellow merchants. Nevertheless, what we can say is that he was truly committed to his home and neighbourhood, even connecting both with dedications to the same personal goddess. What all dedications have in common is their character of communication and divine intervention: Artemis Soteira is a saviour goddess, the dedication to the Charites was made because they had saved him or his family from illness, and the dedication to the Egyptian gods was made in order to thank the gods for heeding him. It seems logical to suppose that the motive for his dedication at the fountain was to thank the nymphs for the water supply near his house, as well as to beautify his own neighbourhood. But Stertinus did not stop at transforming his own house and neighbourhood with his very personal dedications. He and his family also appear in the subscription list of the association of *therapeutai* of the Egyptian gods, briefly discussed at the beginning of this paper (*ID* 2618, col. II. L. 38). While Stertinus was not an attested member of the grand associations of merchants downtown, he was a member of the *therapeutai* who dedicated a Hydreion to Serapeion C.

## 5 Conclusion

With this brief exploration of the religious activities of select individuals, I hope to have shown that the neighbourhood in which an inhabitant of Hellenistic Delos chose to live only occasionally influenced their religious devotion and choices. It seems that individuals did not normally simply worship the nearest or most convenient deity but rather the god that they chose. This could involve either visiting other neighbourhoods, as seen in the example of Quintus Tullius, or bringing worship of the desired deity into their own neighbourhood, as seen in the example of Apollonios II.

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<sup>67</sup> See for example Philostratos of Ascalon and the dedications made to him and by him in Leiwo 1989.

A similar phenomenon can be observed among *Romaioi* such as Quintus Tullius and Stertinus, who set up domestic altars to create a religious space within the house. Stertinus and his family, in particular, showcase that a neighbourhood itself did not necessarily influence an individual's 'religious preferences', no matter how important the deity was. Stertinus worshipped the gods he chose and not those that were next door. He installed dedications and shrines to those that he wished to honour, and he and his family made their way up the slope of Mount Kynthos to the Serapeia in order to worship their chosen deity. Their connection to these gods was reinforced by their membership in the association of the *therapeutai*. Such membership could play an important role in a person's identification within a given society as immigrant or local: origin, status, or social hierarchy are reflected here, as seen in the example of Quintus Tullius and his freedman Heracleon, who worshipped not only in their own house and in their neighbourhood but also as members of their respective associations.

Religion in the residential quarters of Hellenistic Delos is characterised by a bottom-up dynamic. While Athens controlled many sanctuaries on the island and Athenians can be found in almost all priestly positions, the uptake by the population was determined by other factors: individual religious choice and the religious creativity in neighbourhoods trumped the prescribed civic religious structures.

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